

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A apparatus comprising:
- 2 a first processor coupled to a communications channel device, the
- 3 communications device capable of receiving and transmitting information to a video-
- 4 on-demand (VOD) service provider;
- 5 a VOD content decoder coupled to the first processor;
- a video and audio formatting processor coupled to the first processor and
- the content decoder; and
- an index memory coupled to the first processor,
- wherein the index memory stores a plurality of VOD program segment
- representations of one of whole VOD program content and partial VOD program
- content.
- 1 2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first processor receives information
- 2 from a user controller.
- 1 3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the user controller is one of an infrared
- 2 remote controller, a keyboard, a computer mouse and a voice activated controller.
- 1 4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the plurality of VOD program segment
- 2 representations comprises a content identification, a content segment start time, and a
- 3 content segment stop time.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the content identification is one of
2 received from a VOD service provider and selected by a user.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the content segment start time and the
2 content segment stop time are selected by a user.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein one of the plurality of program segment
2 representations requires 1 to 10 bytes of memory.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the index memory is a non-volatile
read and write memory (NVRAM).

9. A system comprising:

a video-on-demand (VOD) service provider coupled to a plurality of set-
top-box (STB) units, wherein each of the plurality of STB units comprises

a first processor coupled to a communications channel device, the
communications device capable of receiving and transmitting information to a VOD
service provider;

a VOD content decoder coupled to the first processor;

a video and audio formatting processor coupled to the first
processor and the content decoder; and

an index memory coupled to the first processor,

11 wherein the index memory stores a plurality of VOD program segment
12 representations of one of whole VOD program content and partial VOD program
13 content and each of the plurality of STB units are capable of communicating with each
14 other.

1 10. The system of claim 9, wherein the processor receives information from a
2 user controller, the VOD service provider, and other processors located at different
3 venues.

1 11. The system of claim 10, wherein the user controller is one of an infrared
2 remote controller, a keyboard, a computer mouse, and voice activated controller.

1 12. The system of claim 9, wherein the plurality of VOD program segment
2 representations comprises a content identification, a content segment start time, and a
3 content segment stop time.

1 13. The system of claim 12, wherein the content identification is one of
2 received from a VOD service provider and selected by a user.

1 14. The system of claim 12, wherein one of the plurality of program segment
2 representations requires 1 to 10 bytes of memory.

1 15. The system of claim 9, wherein the index memory is a non-volatile read
2 and write memory (NVRAM).

1 16. The system of claim 9, wherein a user can send a VOD program segment
2 representation as an electronic mail (email) attachment to another set-top-box
3 unit located at a different venue.

1 17. A method comprising:

2 ordering at least one video-on-demand (VOD) program from a VOD
3 service provider from a first set-top-box (STB) unit;

4 playing at least one VOD program;

5 selecting a start and stop time for recording a representation of a segment
6 of the at least one VOD program;

7 converting a VOD program identifier of the at least one VOD program to a
8 text representation;

9 one of converting the text representation of the VOD program identifier of
10 the at least one VOD program into a unique encoded digital representation and
11 receiving a unique encoded digital representation from the VOD service provider;

12 converting the start and stop time for a segment of the at least one VOD program
13 to a digital representation; and

14 storing the VOD program identifier encoded digital representation and the
15 start and stop digital representation in an index memory.

1 18. The method of claim 17, further comprising converting the stored VOD
2 program identifier encoded digital representation and the start and stop digital
3 representation of the segment of the at least one VOD program to a graphics
4 representation, wherein a user can select the graphics representation to order the
5 segment of the at least one VOD program.

1 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising
attaching the stored VOD program identifier encoded digital
representation and the start and stop digital representation in an electronic mail
(email), and
sending the email to a user located at a different venue.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising,
receiving the email, storing the attached video-on-demand (VOD)
3 program identifier encoded digital representation and the start and stop digital
4 representation in a second set-top-box (STB) unit,
5 converting the VOD program identifier encoded digital representation and
6 the start and stop digital representation to a graphics representation,

7 selecting the graphics representation of the VOD program identifier
8 encoded digital representation and the start and stop digital representation to order the
9 segment of the at least one VOD program,

10 receiving the VOD program segment on the second STB unit,

11 decoding the VOD program segment, and

12 formatting the VOD program segment so a user can play the VOD
13 program segment.

21. A program storage device readable by a machine comprising instructions
that cause the machine to:

order at least one video-on-demand (VOD) program from a VOD service
provider from a first set-top-box (STB) unit;

convert a VOD program identifier of the at least one VOD program to a
text representation;

one of convert the text representation of the VOD program identifier of
the at least one VOD program into a unique encoded digital representation and receive
a unique encoded digital representation from the VOD service provider;

convert a start and stop time for a segment of the at least one VOD
program to a digital representation; and

store the VOD program identifier encoded digital representation and the
start and stop digital representation in an index memory.

1 22. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the instructions further
2 cause the machine to convert the stored VOD program identifier encoded digital
3 representation and the start and stop digital representation of the segment of the at least
4 one VOD program to a graphics representation, wherein a user can select the graphics
5 representation to order the segment of the at least one VOD program.

1 23. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the instructions further
2 cause the machine to
3 attach the stored VOD program identifier encoded digital representation and the
4 start and stop digital representation in an electronic mail (email), and
 send the email to a user located at a different venue.

1 24. The program storage device of claim 23, wherein the instructions further
2 cause the machine to

 receive the email, store the attached VOD program identifier encoded
 digital representation and the start and stop digital representation in a second set-top-
3 box (STB) unit,

4 convert the VOD program identifier encoded digital representation and
5 the start and stop digital representation to a graphics representation,

6 receive the VOD program segment on the second STB unit,

7 decode the VOD program segment, and

10 format the VOD program segment so a user can play the VOD program
11 segment.

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